

LISTING OF CLAIMS

1. (Previously Presented) A method of securing communication of configuration data between a field programmable gate array (FPGA) and an external storage device, the method comprising:

counting a first number of oscillations of a first oscillator on the FPGA during a predetermined time interval;

counting a second number of oscillations of a second oscillator on the FPGA during the predetermined time interval;

generating a ratio between the first number and second number of oscillations, wherein the ratio is a fingerprint that represents an inherent manufacturing process characteristic unique to the FPGA;

transmitting encrypted configuration data from the storage device to the FPGA; and

decrypting the encrypted configuration data in the FPGA using the fingerprint as a decryption key to extract the configuration data.

2. (Original) The method of Claim 1, further comprising:  
configuring the FPGA using the configuration data.

3. (Original) The method of Claim 2, further comprising:  
transmitting the fingerprint from the FPGA to an encryption circuit;  
encrypting the configuration data using the fingerprint as an encryption key; and  
storing the encrypted configuration data in the storage device.

4. (Original) The method of Claim 1, wherein the fingerprint is generated during power-up of the FPGA.

Claims 5-6. (Cancelled)

7. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1, wherein the first and second

oscillators comprise configurable logic blocks of the FPGA.

Claims 8–11. (Cancelled)

12. (Previously Presented) A field programmable gate array (FPGA), comprising:  
a plurality of configurable logic elements being programmable with  
configuration data to implement a desired circuit design;  
a fingerprint element for generating a fingerprint representing inherent  
manufacturing process variations unique to the FPGA, wherein the fingerprint element  
includes,

first and second oscillators; and

a sensing circuit including,

means for counting a first number of oscillations of the first  
oscillator and counting a second number of oscillations of the second  
oscillator during a predetermined time interval; and

means for generating a fingerprint as a ratio between the first  
number and second number of oscillations; and

a decryption circuit coupled to receive encrypted configuration data, the  
decryption circuit configured to decrypt the encrypted configuration data using the  
fingerprint as a decryption key to extract the configuration data.

13. (Original) The FPGA of Claim 12, further comprising:

a configuration circuit for configuring the configurable logic elements with the  
configuration data.

Claim 14. (Cancelled)

15. (Previously Presented) The FPGA of Claim 12, wherein the configuration data  
is encrypted using the fingerprint as an encryption key to generate the encrypted  
configuration data.

Claims 16-20. (Cancelled)

21. (Previously Presented) The FPGA of Claim 12, wherein the first and second oscillators comprise configurable logic blocks.

Claims 22-43. (Cancelled)